



# TABLES OF PERSIAN METRES

FOR THE USE OF STUDENTS

*Compiled*

BY

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## NOTE

The two Tables given in the following pages are derived from the chapter on prosody in the Russian edition of 1890 of Salemann and Zhukovsky's Persian Grammar (which originally appeared in the *Porta Linguarum Orientalium* series in 1889). They are in complete accordance with the '*Arūz-i Šaifi*' and with Blochmann's '*Prosody of the Persians*'. The explanatory text which accompanies the Tables is my own.

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L. S. D.



The Persian prosody is an adaptation of the Arabic metres to the needs of the Persian verse. It is strictly based on the quantity (*i.e.*, shortness or length) of the syllables entering into the composition of the verse.

A syllable is a shortest possible part of a word capable of being pronounced separately in a natural way.

A syllable may, therefore, consist of a single vowel (this can only happen at the beginning of a word), of a vowel with a consonant (also at the beginning of a word), of a consonant with a vowel, of a vowel enclosed between two consonants, and of a vowel preceded by one and followed upon by two consonants. In all these cases the vowel entering into the composition of the syllable may be either a short one or a long one, *i.e.*, either *a*, *i*, *u*, or *ā*, *ī*, *ū*.

A syllable ending in a vowel is called an open syllable. A syllable ending in a consonant is called a closed syllable.

An open syllable with a short vowel is *short*.

An open syllable with a long vowel is *long*.

A closed syllable with a short vowel is *long*.

A closed syllable with a long vowel is *more than long*, except when the closing consonant is a *nūn* (ن), in which case the syllable is merely *long*.

A doubly closed syllable, with a short or long vowel, is *more than long*.

When scanning, a short syllable is represented by a semicircle turned upwards: ∪. A long syllable is represented by a dash: —. A more than long syllable is represented by a dash and a semicircle and its value is that of a long syllable plus a short syllable.



A more than long syllable being the equivalent of two syllables (one long and one short), it is customary, when reading verses, to add, in the case of a more than long syllable, a so-called metric vowel. Oriental scholars generally pronounce the metric vowel as a short *i* (a *kasra*), the Persian themselves prefer pronouncing the metric vowel as a short *u* (*zamma*) in order to avoid the possibility of confusing it with an *izāfa*.

At the end of a hemistich no metric vowel is added, all final syllables of a hemistich being considered as equally long (*i.e.*, simply long). In scanning, the symbol used to denote a more than long syllable at the end of a hemistich is a wavy line (*madda*): ~.

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TABLE I

The different feet entering into the composition of the Persian verse are expressed by forms derived from the Arabic root فعل. There are thirty two different feet, namely :

(1) فَعُولُنْ	— ٓ ٓ	(17) فَاعِلِيَّانْ	ٓ — ٓ ٓ
(2) فَاعِلُنْ	ٓ ٓ ٓ	(18) فَاعِلَاتْ	ٓ ٓ ٓ ٓ
(3) مُفَاعِيلُنْ	— ٓ — ٓ	(19) مُفْتَعِلُنْ	ٓ ٓ ٓ ٓ
(4) مُسْتَفْعِلُنْ	ٓ ٓ — ٓ	(20) فَعَلْ	ٓ ٓ
(5) مُفَاعِلَتُنْ	ٓ ٓ ٓ ٓ	(21) فَعُولْ	ٓ ٓ
(6) مُتَفَاعِلُنْ	ٓ ٓ ٓ ٓ	(22) مُفَاعِيلْ	ٓ — ٓ
(7) فَاعِلَاتُنْ	— ٓ ٓ ٓ	(23) مُفَاعِيلَانْ	ٓ — ٓ ٓ
(8) مُفَعُولَاتْ	ٓ — —	(24) مُفَاعِيلْ	ٓ — ٓ
(9) فَعْ	—	(25) فَعُولْ	ٓ ٓ ٓ
(10) فَاعْ	~	(26) مُفَاعِلُنْ	ٓ ٓ ٓ ٓ
(11) فَعْلُنْ	— —	(27) مُفَاعِلَانْ	ٓ ٓ ٓ ٓ
(12) فَعْلَانْ	ٓ —	(28) فَعْلُنْ	ٓ ٓ ٓ
(13) مُفَعُولُنْ	— ٓ —	(29) فَعِلَاتْ	ٓ ٓ ٓ
(14) مُفَعُولْ	ٓ ٓ —	(30) فَعِلَاتُنْ	ٓ ٓ ٓ —
(15) مُسْتَفْعِلَانْ	ٓ ٓ — ٓ	(31) فَعِلِيَّانْ	ٓ — ٓ ٓ
(16) فَاعِلَاتْ	ٓ ٓ ٓ	(32) فَعِلَاتْ	ٓ ٓ ٓ ٓ



## TABLE II

## THE MORE COMMON PERSIAN METRES

In this table the metres, in order to facilitate their identification, are grouped according to the quantity of the initial syllables of their first foot, and not arranged under the names which the different metres bear in Persian prosody. The small figures under the different feet in the schemes given below refer to the number under which the particular foot is given in Table I.

## ALL LONG

متداک ("continuous") || -- | -- | -- | -- 1  
11

## THREE LONG

هزج ("modulation") || -- u | -- v | -- 2  
1,22 2 13

## TWO LONG

متقارب ("mutually near") || -- u | -- | -- u | -- 3  
11

رجز ("recitation") || -- u -- | -- u -- | -- u -- 4  
4

do || -- u -- | -- u -- | -- u -- | -- u -- 5  
4,13 4

مضارع ("similar") || -- u -- | u -- | -- u -- | u -- 6  
7,17 7 14

do || -- -- u | u u -- | u -- 7  
2 18

do || -- u -- | u -- u | u u -- | u -- 8  
2,16 14

variant of the preceding || -- u -- | u -- | -- u -- | u -- 8a  
14 7

do || -- u -- | u -- u | u u -- | u -- 9

هزج	--- u   u ---   --- u   u --- 10
قريب ("near")	--- u   u --- u   u --- 11
هزج	~-u   u --- u   u --- u   u --- 12
do.	~-u u   u --- 13
	--- u   -u -u   u --- 14

ONE LONG

رمل ("running")	~u -   -u -   -u - 15
do	--- u -   --- u -   --- u - 16
do	~u -   -u -   -u -   -u - 17
do	~-u -   -u -   -u -   -u - 18
متدارک	-u -   -u -   -u -   -u - 19
خفیف ("light")	~uu   -u -u   -u - 20
do	--- uu   -u -u   -u - 21
رمل	~uu   -u -u   -u - 22
do	~-uu   -u -u   -u - 23
do	~-uu   -u -u   -u -u   -u - 24
هزج	--- u   -u -   ~-u   -u - 25
مقتضب ("uttered extempore")	---   u -u   ---   u -u 26
متدارک	-u   -u -   -u   -u - 27
مقتضب	-uu -   u -u -   -u u   u - 28
مشاکل ("suitable")	~-u   u -u   u -u - 29



منسرح ("quick-paced") || ٢ ٥ - | - ٥ ٥ - | ٢ ٥ - | - ٥ ٥ - 30  
2, 16 19

do || - ٥ ٥ - | ٥ - ٥ - | - ٥ ٥ - 31  
19, 8

do || ٢ | - ٥ ٥ - | ٥ - ٥ - | - ٥ ٥ - 32  
9, 10

سريع ("swift") || ٢ ٥ - | - ٥ ٥ - | ٥ ٥ - 33  
2, 16

رجز || - ٥ ٥ - | - ٥ ٥ | - ٥ ٥ - 34

do || - ٥ ٥ - | - ٥ ٥ - | - ٥ ٥ - | ٥ ٥ - 35

do || - ٥ - ٥ | - ٥ ٥ - | ٥ - ٥ | - ٥ ٥ - 36

## ONE SHORT

هزج || ٢ - ٥ | - - - ٥ | - ٥ ٥ 37  
1, 22 3

do. || - - - ٥ | - - - ٥ | - - - ٥ 38

do || ٢ - - - ٥ | - - - ٥ | - - - ٥ | - - - ٥ 39  
8, 23

مقتارب || - - ٥ | - - ٥ | - ٥ ٥ 40

do || ٢ ٥ | - - ٥ | - - ٥ | - - ٥ 41  
20, 21

do || - - ٥ | - - ٥ | - - ٥ | - - ٥ 42

مضارع || ٢ - ٥ | ٥ - - ٥ | ٥ - ٥ - | ٥ - - ٥ 43  
2, 16 18 24

قريب || - ٥ - | ٥ - - ٥ | ٥ - - ٥ 44  
7

هزج || ٢ - ٥ | ٥ - - ٥ | ٥ - - ٥ 45  
1, 22

do || ٢ - ٥ | ٥ - - ٥ | ٥ - - ٥ | ٥ - - ٥ 46

مقتارب || - - | ٥ - ٥ | - - | ٥ - ٥ 47  
11 25

رجز || - ٥ ٥ - | - ٥ - ٥ | - ٥ ٥ - | - ٥ - ٥ 48  
19 26

do || - ٥ - ٥ | - ٥ - ٥ | - ٥ - ٥ 49

هزج || ٢ ٥ - ٥ | - ٥ - ٥ | - ٥ - ٥ | - ٥ - 50  
26, 27

مجتبى ("uprooted") ||  $\overline{\text{—}} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} | \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} | \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} | \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—}$  51  
28, 29, 11, 12 30

||  $\overline{\text{—}} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} | \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} | \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} | \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—}$  52  
30, 31

TWO SHORT

جدید ("new") ||  $\text{—} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} | \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} | \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—}$  53  
26 30

رمل ||  $\overline{\text{—}} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} | \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} | \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} | \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—}$  54  
7, 17 7 12

مقدارک ||  $\text{—} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} | \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} | \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} | \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—}$  55  
28

A quatrain (رباعي) is a peculiarly Persian poetical form of a changeable metre, unknown to the Arabs, similar in its purpose to a limerick or an epigram. The metre of the quatrain has the following form :

||  $\overline{\text{—}} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} | \overline{\text{—}} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} | \overline{\text{—}} \text{—} \text{—} \text{—}$   
— — — —

that is to say either :

مُسْتَفْعِلَتَيْنِ مَفْعَلَيْنِ مَفْعَلَتَيْنِ

or :

مَفْعُولَاتَيْنِ مَفْعُولَيْنِ مَفْعُولَيْنِ

or :

مَفَاعِلَيْنِ

or any possible combinations of these feet in a verse.

The schemes in the preceding tables are, of course, written and read from right to left as they are symbols standing for the syllables of words couched in actual Persian writing. It should be noted that some scholars (E. J. W. Gibb, E. G. Browne, R. A. Nicholson, and others) have in their works, when occasionally giving the correct scansion of a verse, written its scheme from left to right. That has to be borne in mind when consulting their works, but should be strictly avoided in practice.





The simplest way of identifying a metre is to have recourse to pencil and paper, putting a dash for every long syllable of a hemistich and a semicircle for a short syllable, taking care to mark *both*, when a syllable is ambiguous [the personal pronoun of the 2nd pers. sing.  $\text{تو}$ , the conjunction  $\text{و}$ , the *izāfa* in any shape, the mute  $\text{ه}$  (*hā-i* *liauvaz*) at the end of a word, may be either long or short, as necessitated by the requirements of the metre]. When all the syllables of one hemistich have been recorded, a second hemistich is analysed in the same way, just underneath the first. The two schemes obtained are then compared and superfluous marks standing for ambiguous syllables eliminated. The scheme thus verified is then looked for in Table II.

In the absence of pencil and paper, the fingers of one's left hand may be used, keeping the fingers intended for a long syllable outstretched, and folding down the fingers standing for short syllables with one's right hand fingers. This latter method is especially recommended when verifying the syllables in a verse the metre of which seems to be familiar.

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